

From Here to Eternity – A Living Hope (part 2)

1. Introduction

1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...*

- a. Last time we looked at foundations of our living hope and established three things. Firstly, it is because of God's mercy. Secondly, we gained this living hope as a part of the package deal of being born again. And then thirdly, Peter tells us that all of this is through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
- b. These are three reasons that Peter gives us that should convince us that both our present and future hope is secure enough to withstand any test that we may find ourselves facing.
- c. In the next few verses, Peter expands on these three foundational truths to tell us how this living hope impacts upon our lives today, and how what is laid up for us in the future will keep us focused and faithful.

2. You have an inheritance

1 Peter 1:4 *...to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...*

- a. There is an inheritance that we can look forward to, but there's a bit of untangling to do first. Have you ever benefitted from an inheritance? – maybe from your parents, or grandparents, or maybe from an aunt or some more distant relative.
- b. Before you obtained that inheritance, something had to happen – someone had to die so that you could inherit what was promised. You may have known what you were being promised, or it may have come as a surprise to you.
- c. But you only got this inheritance because someone died. And the same goes for the inheritance that Peter is talking about here. You got this inheritance because Jesus died. It's the same process that we looked at a few weeks ago in Hebrews 9, where Jesus is both the testator and executor of his will. He died to fully pay the price for your sin. He is now the great high priest who is seated at the right hand of God who is able to help us in our time of need.
 - i For you to obtain this inheritance, Jesus had to die, but then he was raised to life again so that he could deliver this inheritance to all who put their faith in him.
- d. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you. Is he saying I don't get this inheritance until I die?
 - i The construction of the sentence helps us with understanding what Peter is saying here. Verse 3 – “we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus” but the sentence doesn't end there, it continues straight on “to an inheritance.”
 - ii So there are two objects to the verb to be born again, or to put it another way, there are two ways in which we benefit from being born again.
 - iii There are two ways in which we can understand what this means. Either Peter is saying that as a consequence of being born again we first of all have a living hope, and then secondly, but equally, we have in inheritance. Or he is saying that we have one thing that

he describes in two different ways – a living hope, which is our inheritance. In other words, our living hope is our inheritance.

- e. God has blessed us with this wonderful, living hope that just goes on getting better, because when we die it enters a new dimension of glory and blessing beyond our imagination.

2 Timothy 4:8 *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

- i Paul carried this future reward and inheritance as a living hope throughout his life – it kept him focused and it kept him going.

3. Future blessing

1 Peter 1:4 *...to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...*

- a. The word inheritance implies something in the future. Peter says, to be born again is to have this inheritance which has been secured for you. Jesus himself is our inheritance – he described himself to Abraham as his “very great reward”. This inheritance includes all that Jesus has provided and will provide for all who have been born again, and have been purchased with his blood.
 - i This inheritance is so vast and indescribable, that the only way Peter can describe it is to tell us some of the things that it is not!
- b. First, it is **imperishable**. Peter is describing its durability – this inheritance will last forever. Jesus described it as treasure in heaven, where moth and rust cannot corrupt or destroy it. It will not deteriorate or decay over time. That’s important to know. Your inheritance will be as good as new in a million years from now.
 - i **Aparthos** (imperishable) in Greek means something is not ravaged by an invading army. Think back to the Old Testament – what was Israel’s inheritance? The land of Canaan was Israel’s inheritance. But what happened? Because of Israel’s sin, that inheritance was plundered and ravaged and destroyed many times in the course of history.
 - ii Peter is saying here this cannot happen to your inheritance. It does not depend on your performance, good or bad – it is secured by the blood of Jesus and given by his promise.
- c. The second word that describes what this inheritance is not – he says it is **undefiled**. Have you ever gone to the fridge to get something to eat, only to find that it has become covered in green mould, polluted and worthless?
 - i We live in a polluted world, breathing infected air and we transmit it to everything we touch. That pollution is not greenhouse gases, and the infection is not coronavirus – it’s sin.
 - ii Paul says in Romans 8, the creation is stained, it’s defiled, there is a moral malaise that has corrupted everything in this world, and the whole of creation is groaning, waiting for adoption, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.
 - iii But our inheritance is in perfect condition, free from any spot of dirt or pollution. It is kept in heaven for you it is out of reach of any polluting or defiling influence.

- d. The third word of description is **unfading**. We live in a world where everything ultimately fades.
- i The first description, *imperishable*, describes the indestructible nature of the substance of our inheritance, *unfading* describes the beauty and grace of the glory of that inheritance. That glory will never fade, never tarnish, never grow old, and never diminish in any way.
 - ii The crown of glory that is ours will never diminish in its brilliance and glory. Unfading gives us the assurance that all of the brilliance and splendour will never be reduced by one shade, in contrast with the fading nature of all that is earthly.
 - iii The kingdom of heaven has no decaying elements or processes. Nothing is defiled and nothing fades away. Time can't touch it because it's in a timeless place. Sin can't touch it because it's in a sinless place.
- e. Your inheritance is imperishable. Your inheritance is undefiled. And your inheritance is unfading. It is death-proof, it is sin-proof, and it is time-proof.
- f. Peter says your inheritance's **security**. We have all become much more security conscious in recent years, with the increase in identity theft and so on.
- i Your inheritance is valuable – only God knows how valuable our inheritance really is. We know we have an inheritance waiting for us, but it all seems a bit distant and unreal, so we don't really think about it that much.
 - ii Peter gives us this security clause that tells us your inheritance is kept in heaven for you. No-one else can take it from you. In most bibles it says this inheritance is kept or reserved in heaven for you.
 - iii The word actually means it's guarded – it's being watched over. You have an angelic security guard watching over your inheritance, keeping an eye on it to make sure it's safe.
 - iv Your inheritance really is in the safest place. But is it all about the future, or is there any way we can benefit from this inheritance now, in our everyday lives? How does this living hope make a difference to us in the pressures and struggles of our everyday lives.

4. Everyday Living Hope

1 Peter 1:5-9 ...who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- a. Peter gives us five ways in which our living hope is a daily strength and blessing to us, keys that will unlock storehouses of power to see us through the pressures and trials of life.
- b. Firstly, we are kept by **faith**. It's the same word that we looked at just now – it literally means we are guarded by faith. Faith is our guardian, it protects us from unbelief and doubting.

- i This is a powerful verse – it says we are protected by the power of God through faith. God uses his divine power to protect us all through our life for the salvation that will be revealed at the end of the age.
 - ii God means his people to be profoundly secure in him. God himself is doing everything that must be done to guarantee our final, eternal salvation.
 - iii And this is ongoing, through the whole of our lives. The only thing that can keep us from heaven is forsaking our faith in Jesus and turning to other hopes and other treasures.
 - iv So to protect us, God gives us ways to exercise faith – he inspires and nourishes and strengthens and builds our faith
- c. Secondly, Peter highlights **joy**. Verse 6 says “In this you rejoice.” In verse 8 he amplifies our rejoicing, saying that we “rejoice with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.” That’s the kind of joy that’s going to have a great impact on ourselves, but it will also have an impact on those around us.

Psalm 4:7 *You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.*

- i There are other sources of joy, but joy that comes from the Lord is far superior and longer-lasting than any other source. The joy that comes from relationship and fellowship with the Lord is living hope joy, a joy that sustains us, even when all around us is failing and falling apart.
 - ii The joy that is sustained by our living hope is based on our anticipation and expectation of our future wedding consummation with our Bridegroom God.
 - iii Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and the measure of joy we have in our lives is also a measure of how much we are walking in the Spirit and drinking from his fountain of delights.
- d. Thirdly, there is **suffering**. In verse 6 he says many of us suffer, or have been grieved by various trials. Trials and testing are part of our everyday life, and Peter very deliberately puts joy and suffering together in the same verse.
- i Life has downs as well as ups. There’s a couple of words in this verse that might seem a bit puzzling at first – “if necessary”. What kind of necessity is Peter thinking of? He is not thinking of the trials caused by our circumstances or bad decisions.
 - ii These are trials or distresses that are designed by God for our good. He is teaching us that the sovereign will of God governs all the distressing things that happen to us, and therefore the design in them is not ultimately the design of evil men or of Satan, but actually the design of God, and it is for our good.
 - iii Peter concludes chapter 4 by saying, “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.”
 - iv The people that Peter was writing this letter to were facing difficulty and hardship, probably more so than any of us do, yet Peter encourages them to rejoice in the midst of their suffering.

- v There is purpose in God's allowing this distress in our lives: verse 7 begins – "so that". Here now is the good that comes out of our distresses and trials – it confirms the genuineness of our faith, it refines our faith like gold is refined by fire.
 - vi If you pass the test, your faith becomes proven. If you never had any trials, your faith would be untested, and you would never know if your faith is real or not. So when you go through a trial, God is giving you an opportunity to draw on the strength of your living hope, and if you rise above the trial by faith and hold on to God, your faith is proven.
- e. Number four is found in verse 8 – your **love for Jesus**. "Though you have not seen him, you love him." You're in the same position as those who Peter was writing to in the 1st Century.
- i Peter here is talking about physical sight. It's easy for us to love and trust someone that we've seen. Like us, they had never physically met Jesus, never walked with him, never eaten with him or heard his voice. "And yet," he says, "you love him."
 - ii Yet in another sense you do see him far better than thousands who saw him face to face. You see the glory of God shining in this man's face at every turn in the gospels. And because you see him with the eyes of the heart, you love him and trust him and rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.
 - iii The verb Peter uses here – **agapa** – is present tense – you are continually loving him. That word expresses the love of the will, it means you have chosen to be faithful in loving him.
 - iv It is that intimate flow of love in a heart that has been transformed by first having received love. Through the regeneration of new birth, I have the ability to love God with the same love with which he loves me. That is mind-blowing and amazing. I don't have to physically see him to love him.
 - v He reveals himself to me through his word and through his Spirit. He is my daily revelation of this living hope, sustaining me and strengthening me through testing and trials, my eternal source of joy who is changing me from glory to glory, to be more like him.
- f. And then finally, we are being **kept by God**. In verse 4 he says, "there is an inheritance being kept in heaven for you," and then in verse 5 he says, "you're being kept for it."
- i It's as if God said, "I'm going to keep your inheritance. It'll never fade. It'll never be defiled. It will never diminish or go away. And I'm keeping you for it,"

5. Conclusion

- a. All of these things that Peter talks about point to one final conclusion, which he outlines in verse 9. That is to obtain the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul.
 - i The verb **obtain** is also present tense, which means we are obtaining our salvation now, we are living with access to the benefits of our salvation right now.
 - ii Flowing out of that personal fellowship we have with Jesus through love and trust is the outcome of our faith, which we have here and now obtained, namely the salvation of your souls.

- b. The ultimate goal of this living hope is Jesus himself – my very great reward. God is at work in me to will and to work his good pleasure, and however bad your past has been, God’s counsel is to push delete and move on. There is an inheritance waiting for you – and you don’t want to miss it.

Philippians 3:13-14 *But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*